

STARS Questions and Answers – April 9, 2001
Reference Final RFP

1. QUESTION: Reference: RFP Section L.10.E.(6)(a)(9) Second Paragraph (Page 45) and Subsection (c)(5) (Page 46)

The second paragraph, second sentence requires, if necessary, for the offerors to propose on-(contractor) site, off- (government) site, and high cost center rates. However, Subsection (c)(5), the Table Instructions, do not address off- (government) site rates. In addition, prior questions suggested that off-site rates would not be necessary.

Please clarify if such off (government) site rates are to be separately priced. If they are, we also request that the government provide the historical (or planned) allocation of hours (or percent of hours) between on-site and off-site locations.

ANSWER: The majority of the work will be performed in the contractor's facility. There are approximately five contractor employees currently working on the STEPS contract in a government facility. We anticipate this may go up to approximately fifteen over the life of the STARS contract. The requirement for proposal purposes is to bid the labor category rate at the contractor's facility. If the government chooses to furnish facilities under specific task orders, then consideration for those government furnished resources will be negotiated after receipt of the Task Order Proposal (TOP). Section L will be modified accordingly.

2. QUESTION: What is the historical allocation of hours (or percent of hours) between on (contractor) site and high cost center locations?

ANSWER: The government has not issued any Task Orders that have utilized high cost center locations or rates on the STEPS contract. However, this high cost center location consideration may apply based on where the team members are located. Therefore, the government believes the contractor is in the best position to provide the distribution of the hours among the team members and between different cost centers. The government will be validating realism of the proposed distribution per Section M.4.4 Price Area. Huntsville is not considered a high cost area.

3. QUESTION: Reference: RFP Section B, Supplies or Services and Prices - CLINs 0006, 0007, 0010, and 0011 (Materials and Travel CLINs) and Response to Question 27 of second DRFP.

Question: Because provisional indirect rates change year-to-year, we request that the indirect rates for these Reimbursable CLINs be reimbursed at the actual provisional rates at time of occurrence rather than based on prior "fixed rates".

ANSWER: It is the intent of this contract to have fixed labor rates along with fixed “contractor applicable burden” percentages per year. Establishing a fixed indirect percentage will contribute to the stabilization of the overall cost to the government in addition to simplifying the contract administration in pricing future Task Orders.

4. QUESTION: Reference: Attachment 4-Pricing Tables and Appendix A, Personnel Qualifications.

Question: Because there is no description for a Subject Matter Expert in Appendix A and because individual rates for such (SME) experts may be substantially different from SME to SME, we suggest this labor category be individually negotiated on a per task order basis rather than included as a fixed price rate in the prime contract offer.

ANSWER:

The SME labor category is a fixed priced labor category and will not be individually negotiated on a per task order basis.

The following will be added to Appendix A, Personnel Qualifications:

2.21 Subject Matter Expert

2.21.1 Typical Duties: Provides “Gray Beard” advisory, consulting, and senior executive level interface coordination services in support of Battle Lab initiatives as specifically requested by the government. Works directly with executive and senior leadership levels of the government and industry to coordinate and resolve highly complex issues and challenges. Collects and analyzes data on technical issues, national policies, and applicable regulations and statutes for use in Battle Lab long range planning and execution of special projects.

2.21.2 Qualifications: The Subject Matter Expert shall possess the following minimum qualifications:

2.21.3 Shall have a Master’s degree and at least 20 years experience in national policy development and executive leadership (e.g. defined in U.S. government as General Officer level or civil service equivalent), and positions that require specific expertise in the Space Product arena; Weather, Terrain, Environmental Monitoring (WTEM); Positioning, Navigation and Timing; Reconnaissance, Intelligence, Surveillance and Target Acquisition (RISTA); missile defense; space control; satellite communications; Information Operations, space integration; and Control Battlefield Visualization (C2BV); or have a PhD and at least 15 years experience in any combination of the disciplines addressed above.

5. QUESTION: Reference Attachment 4, STARS RFP, which allocates labor hours, by FY and Surge Option, to the various labor categories to be priced in the proposal. We understand this is an estimate that has been developed to facilitate the government’s cost

evaluation and to establish ceiling amounts for the labor CLINs (Basic Contract and Surge Option). We also understand that the actual mix and utilization of labor categories, post-award, may differ from the allocation contained in Attachment 4.

Several of the STARS labor categories have minimal hours allocated by FY, e.g. Software Technician, Logistics Management Specialist, Assistant Systems Analyst, (etc). The low number of hours available in certain categories makes it very difficult for Prime Offerors to allocate any meaningful amount of hours to Subcontractors. Consequently, for cost modeling purposes, some labor categories will only have one or two rates proposed. We feel that this is to the detriment of the government. Our team was developed to allow the government to reach out to any number of companies capable of satisfying a breadth of requirements. The team structure we proposed will provide flexibility to support changing/evolving requirements, particularly Surge Options. We also intend for the government to have a wide array of rates to choose from for any given category. As currently structured Attachment 4 limits the number of rates we can propose, negating the benefits our team structure provides.

Question #1: Is it acceptable for Prime Offerors to include rates for subcontractors even though no hours are allocated to that subcontractor in the cost model (Attachment 4)? The Prime would continue to have a responsibility to determine the rates fair and reasonable and to perform a cost/price realism analysis. The intent is not to “game” the cost model but rather to have as many rates as possible available to the government.

Question #2: If the answer to question #1 is no, will the government allow us to utilize “non-priced categories” post-award based upon “team composite” rates for a given sub in a given category? For example, if we do not allocate any hours to Subcontractor X in the Training Specialist category, can we utilize it post-award based on the team composite rate which was allocated to that category in Attachment 4?

ANSWER:

The rates may be listed with zero hours; however, each of those hourly rates may not exceed the highest rate against which fully supported numbers of hours have been distributed in that labor category. Apparent attempts to “game” the calculation of evaluated price through unsupported labor hour distribution will be considered unrealistic. All rates proposed will be fixed at award. Offerors are reminded that distribution of labor hours must be consistent with teaming agreements, subcontracting plan, the overall proposal approach, and FAR 52.219-14, Subcontracting (50% rule). Distribution of hours must be the offeror’s best estimate of the source intended to be used in execution of the contract. Distribution of labor hours will be evaluated for consistency with the approach proposed for realism and cost risk.

6. QUESTION: Request the government consider the following change in theRFP requirement, to allow more flexibility in how the offeror meets the proposal submission requirements without affecting the government’s ability to access the data.

Paragraph L10.C.6 now reads in part "The Offerors shall submit the proposal

utilizing virus free Microsoft Office 2000. The price data shall be provided in Excel 2000 (Office 2000) format with narrative information in Word 2000 (Office 2000) format...

" Please consider rewording this requirement to read, "The Offeror's proposal shall be virus free and compatible with Microsoft Office 2000. The price data shall be provided in a form compatible with Excel 2000 (Office 2000) format with narrative information compatible with Word 2000 (Office 2000) format..."

ANSWER:

Section L10. C. 6. – Will be changed as follows:

6. The Offerors proposal shall be virus free and compatible with Microsoft Office. The price data shall be provided in a form compatible with Microsoft Excel format with narrative information compatible with Microsoft Word format and clearly titled. If files contain links, the links must be intact and maintained through all revisions. Spreadsheets should be easily traceable. None of the files submitted shall have any read/write/password protection. INCLUDE ALL FORMULAS IN YOUR SPREADSHEETS. INCLUDE NOTES TO ADD CLARITY AND UNDERSTANDING OF FORMULAS/ENTRIES.

Battle Lab Tour Questions – March 29, 2001:

NMD User Lab/Hardware Software Integration Center (HSIC) Overview slides presented by Jerry Bendrick are posted to the web site for viewing. Some information related to NMD has been deleted.

1. QUESTION: En-Route Mission Plan Rehearsal System (EMPRS) - How was this implemented?

ANSWER: The EMPRS project was a combination of GOTS, COTS and SATCOMs.

QUESTION 2-11:

(Note: The answer to question 2 through 11 is listed below.)

2. Noticed that of the 20 or so machines in the room, only a couple were turned on or even plugged in at the time. This may be project-specific (only need certain systems for certain missions). It did not look like all of the machines were connected to the cisco switch (lack of cabling running from the machines) as well. In the ideal configuration for the HSIC (operational), are all of the machines powered, used, and connected to the server/switch?
3. The main switch appears to be a Cisco Catalyst 5500. Are there other switches (multiple networks within the HSIC)?
4. Does the HSIC run a single or multiple servers for the SIPR, NIPR, ARSPACE LAN, and Bendo (?) LAN connections?
5. What kinds of server(s) are in use now?
6. What does the current network architecture look like?
7. Does the HSIC run its own firewall to keep it away from other portions of the extranet?
8. Is the UPS part of the HSIC system or part of the SY Tech facility? Interesting to have a specific unit for the system alone (as opposed to a building-wide UPS with a PDU and multiple panels).
9. Are the primary connections within the room (between the server, switch gear, and workstations) copper, or are some fiber?
10. Are there plans to upgrade the system entirely to fiber or another setup, or are the users satisfied with the current setup?
11. Are there security or other specific concerns about hooking additional servers into the existing HSIC network?

ANSWER: It is not the intent of the STARS acquisition to have the contractor build or maintain the HSIC or NMD User Lab. The responsibility of the HSIC and NMD User Lab will continue under the SMDIS contract. Any tasking on the STARS contract will be for “usage” of the individual labs and will relate directly to the Task Orders. Specific Task Orders may be issued requiring integration or testing of command and control

systems within the Labs. The requirement will be identified in individual Task Orders and coordination with the government manager of these facilities will be required, as outlined in the individual task orders.